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The Hope Process and Social Inclusion

By
VALERIE BRAITHWAITE

The psychology of individual hope has been well articulated through the work of Seligman and Snyder, but scholars have done little to extend this model to understand how individuals engage in collective hope. This article develops a model of the collective hope process that emphasizes the importance of principles of social inclusion, open contestation of goals, and transparent pathways to give certainty to the belief that the public is important to the process, even if the same public is uncertain and divided about the outcomes. The study is based on a survey of 2,040 Australians who shared their hopes, fears, and actions in relation to the Australian taxation system in 2000.

Keywords: collective hope; hope process; social inclusion; democratic participation; trust; tax compliance

When individuals seek to achieve an outcome as a group, hope is inevitably involved. As Philip Pettit observes in the conclusion of his article in this volume, we collaborate with others on collective undertakings with a certain “cognitive resolve.” The spirit of cooperation is not simply a function of social bonds, particularly in instances where we are foregoing other opportunities. In addition to looking after our relationships and meeting our obligations, questions of goals and the means for achieving those goals enter into our deliberations (Braithwaite 1995). We ask ourselves whether the collective goal is worth striving for, whether it is achievable, and whether our contribution is valuable. There is no certainty to the way we

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answer any of these questions. Striving for the goal may make things better for us all, or it may not; the goal may be achievable, although any collective undertaking is fraught with unpredictability as to whether it is sustainable; and our contribution may be essential to the outcome or may be irrelevant. To move forward and collaborate with others, we cannot rationally wait for certainty, as Pettit points out. Instead, we “do the sums,” sign on to a plan of action, and resolve to move forward—with hope as the energizer of our actions and the backstop to our rationality. In this article, we refer to this as the process by which the individual embarks on collective hope.

The central thesis of this article is that sustainable collective action requires individuals to “sign on” to the collective hope process (of the kind described by Courville and Piper as well as Shearing and Kempa, this volume) involving our sharing a vision of desired social change and seeing opportunity for its realization. While the model developed in this article is relevant to a collective hope process generally, it is tested within the context of a democratic society where systems of governance are in place to allow the collective hope process to work. Just as a democratic structure of governance allows for collective hope, so it allows for public hope. Drahos (this volume) makes an important distinction between public and collective hope. Public hope is the rather vacuous “razzle dazzle” passed on to the community through clever marketing and spin-doctoring by powerful elites. Collective hope, on the other hand, conveys understanding of and commitment to goals and a process of implementation. It is owned by the people rather than being imposed from above, and it gives a sense of meaning and coherence to their lives. Within a democratic society, it is likely that individuals become involved in collaborative agendas (e.g., voting, fighting a war, buying government bonds) as a response to appeals to both collective and public hope. As Courville and Piper and also Shearing and Kempa have argued, it is unrealistic to consider public and collective hopes as alternative forms of hope; they are characterized by considerable overlap. It is reasonable, however, to expect truly democratic institutions to prioritize the processes whereby public hope can be “undressed” and, like collective hope, called to account. Sadly, Peter Drahos’s article is a poignant reminder that we would be deceiving ourselves if we believed that democracy routinely offers such protection. By the same token, it is reasonable to suppose that in a democratic society, collective hope works at some level to sustain collaboration and collective action.

When a social group shares a vision and sees prospects for social change, the collective hope process can be said to be working well. In such circumstances, individuals are likely to be prepared to make sacrifices and to give up some of their freedoms: in short, to pay the costs with the hope of the advantages that will accompany social change. One of the outcomes of a well-functioning hope process is hypothesized as cooperation. In the empirical study reported in this article, the hope process is used to explain cooperation with a tax authority.

Sometimes, the collective hope process does not work well in the sense that it is “underdeveloped.” The vision may not be shared across the community, or impediments may interfere with its implementation within the dominant social order. An underdeveloped hope process is likely to trigger dissociation from the authority

and the social infrastructure over which it exerts control. Dissociation does not imply hostility, although this may occur, but rather the irrelevance of authority. Dissociation may be a temporary state while resources are found to promote a successful collective hope process outside the system and challenge the dominant social order. At the heart of a hope process struggling to widen its appeal is private hope.

This article is structured around four questions. First, can hope theory, as formulated in the individual context, be extended to account for collective hope? Second, can the problems posed by psychological individualism be overcome to account for the operation of collective hope? Third, can we find empirical evidence to support the collective hope model? Fourth, does the empirical model adequately represent Drahos's (this volume) conception of collective hope or is it open to the kind of exploitation that Drahos describes as inherent in public hope?

At the outset, it needs to be clearly stated that this article makes no suppositions about whether the hopes of the collective, if realized, promote the common good. As Cartwright (this volume) demonstrates, quests, no matter how noble and well intended, do not always produce the outcomes expected. Hannah Arendt makes the same point, capturing the uncertainty of starting something: "We weave our strand into a network of relations. What comes of it we never know. We've all been taught to say: Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do. That is true of all action. Quite simply and concretely true, because one *cannot* know" (Arendt 2000a, 21). And this is where hope enters our analysis.

Hope Theory: The Individual Perspective

For modern-day psychologists, hope is essentially goal-directed thinking. Snyder et al. define hope as "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)" (Snyder, Irving, and Anderson 1991, 287). This conception of hope should resonate with all of us. It occurs when we would like to reach a goal but are not absolutely certain that it will happen, even when we take action to effect the change. For example, we might set ourselves the goal of finding a job; we plan our strategy, perhaps through an employment agency, perhaps through answering advertisements in the newspaper, or perhaps through our social networks; we plan how we should present ourselves to be successful, and we tell ourselves that we can do it. As we meet with some success, our confidence grows, we try new approaches, we learn new pathways, and we see ourselves as "winners," as can-do people who can make things happen. Hope theory for individuals, therefore, poses three challenges—articulating our goals, identifying the routes or pathways that we can use to achieve these goals, and finding our personal sense of agency. Agency refers to a self-perception that we can move along the pathway to goal achievement—we have the willpower to start something and to persevere in the goal journey. If our hope lacks "legs" in any of these regards, it is reduced in

stature as a human resource for change, reduced to wishful thinking, or daydreaming, or escapism.

Hope theory has commanded considerable support in recent years (Gillham 2000; Snyder 2000), with two findings of importance for developing a theory of collective hope. First, while hope theory is essentially cognitively based, emotions have a part to play. Emotions are regarded as a by-product of goal-directed thought (Snyder 2000, 11). Positive emotions follow from the successful pursuit of goals; negative emotions, from their less successful pursuit. The second finding of considerable importance is that when goals are blocked, those who show high hope differ from those with low hope in that they “perceive that they can use alternate routes and have the requisite agentic thinking to activate themselves” (Snyder 2000, 11). Perhaps Snyder’s conception of the high-hope person provides an answer to the low hope that is apparent in Arendt’s portrayal of the marginalized Jewess, Rahel Varnhagen. Rahel displays the hope of the helpless, feeling that it “is senseless to attempt to do anything in this disordered, indefinite world” and that it is best to wait in hope, a hope that “seduces one into peering about in the world for a tiny, infinitesimally tiny crack which circumstances may have overlooked, for a crack, be it ever so narrow, which nevertheless would help to define, to organize, to provide a center for the indefinite world—because the longed-for unexpected something might ultimately emerge through it in the form of definite happiness” (Arendt 2000b, 58).

Hope theory provides a blueprint for how we might use hope to improve our well-being. Developed in the context of psychological work on stress and helplessness and their adverse effects on mental health, hope theory makes a significant contribution to teaching us to live more positive lives (psychologists refer to this field as positive psychology), at least in the sense of “getting what we want out of life” (Schwartz 2000, 409). But with these substantial gains come drawbacks that have not gone unnoticed by the psychological community (Schwartz 2000; Seligman 2000).

A Critique of Hope Theory

First and foremost, hope theory assumes mastery, almost domination, on the part of the individual in the way he or she engages with the world. As Antonovsky (1972) has put it, the tradition from which hope theory has emerged rests on the basic assumption that “control [the dangerous] agent and the problem is solved” (p. 538). Yet not all things can be controlled by the individual nor should they be. Rahel Varnhagen could not change her Jewishness although it was a source of shame to her, “the misery and misfortune of my life” (Arendt 2000b, 49). Arendt describes the way in which Rahel constructed her unhappiness as a personal problem from which she could escape only through refusing to engage with the world. Undoubtedly, hope theorists would argue that some things have to be accepted, and then we need to move on. But Arendt does not see the solution as being so straightforward. Arendt presents a compelling argument for restating Rahel’s pre-

dicament as a political problem, a problem of a people who were at that time stateless, whose feelings of being marginalized in society led them to strive for personal advancement through being exceptional individuals rather than to fight for political equality for the Jewish people. In other words, the hope that would make a difference for Rahel was not individualistic but collectivist. It demanded reformulation of identity through analyzing and redefining group relations.

Regardless of whether one agrees with this particular analysis, Arendt highlights the key constraints of hope theory. First, it is a theory about individuals advancing their own well-being, with little consideration for how their actions may affect others or how the pursuit of individual well-being may shape the quality of social life more broadly. Second, it is a theory that fails to take into account how group relations impinge on the hope of individuals. Hope theory renders as irrelevant the political reality that while we may believe that all people are entitled to human rights, some of us have more rights and, as a result, more opportunities than others, and some of us have more resources to protect those rights and opportunities. Being Jewish in the world of Rahel Varnhagen meant the denial of rights; being stateless and nonpolitical meant having no collective voice for claiming rights and preventing the stultifying domination felt at the hands of German gentile society. No doubt, the respected members of German society at that time were intent on doing nothing more than realizing their own hopes. The question is, however, at what cost to what appear to be the more modest hopes of others?

Key Elements in a Theory of Collective Hope

A theory of collective hope has to provide resolution to the inevitable conflicts that arise from competing hopes. To put it more constructively, it needs to provide a framework for understanding how individual aspirations are coordinated to bring about a groundswell of opinion that certain goals are worth striving for, that there are pathways to their accomplishment, and that the collective has the capacity to move things along toward the achievement of these goals. Mandela's mobilization of antiapartheid forces around the world illustrates the power of collective hope: Mandela (2001a, 2001b) recognized the importance of building consensus around core goals, of finding and using multiple pathways to advance these goals, and of empowering his people so that they never lost sight of their ability to shape their own destiny. The outcome of the hope process that was nurtured over some twenty-five years or more speaks for itself. But understanding the collective hope process to the point where it can be generalized to other contexts remains a challenge.

The work of Antonovsky (1972, 1979, 1993) on stress-related illness offers a starting point for moving the key concepts of hope theory into a collective frame. Antonovsky challenged the popular view of life stressors as exogenous problems to be obliterated, mastered, or dominated by human will. He reformulated the problem in terms of stressors' being a ubiquitous part of human existence: life is chaotic, and in some sense, stress is life itself. Antonovsky (1972) introduced the idea of

people's having "generalized resistance resources" (p. 541), which are always on hand to restore equilibrium when states of tension are created by the demands of everyday life. This perspective changes the objective of the hope process from that of control to coexistence, from the domination of one's environment to accommodation and, where appropriate, to its reshaping.

When a social group shares a vision and sees prospects for social change, the collective hope process can be said to be working well.

Among the resistance resources proposed by Antonovsky (1972) are the ability to be flexible, to improvise, and to be ingenious in meeting demands (provides adaptability); the knowledge that others care about one's well-being (provides social bonds); and identification with the broader community such that the individual knows that the society, and not just the individual, is familiar with these demands and will help deal with them (provides meaning in life). High-resistance resources according to Antonovsky bring a pervasive, enduring, though dynamic feeling of confidence that the demands one is encountering are predictable and explicable, the resources are available to meet these demands, and the demands are challenges that are worthy of engagement.

Thus, while Antonovsky was concerned to find the secret of individual well-being, his analysis was far from individualistic. Individuals were best positioned for well-being when they were enmeshed in collective settings that nurtured their adaptability, that impressed upon them their importance and value to others, and that reinforced the meaning that they gave to their lives. Through Antonovsky, we have a conception of hope at the collective level that does not assume that everyone needs to get what he or she wants.

Moreover, Antonovsky alerts us to the way in which hopes are revised and reformulated through collective rather than individual actions and, most important, through our shared understanding of the way things are. In the case of Rahel, the secret is not so much to escape her Jewishness and the pain that it brings but to understand the situation that she is in and to make sense of her experience, however unpleasant. Developing a sense of coherence about her life, something that needs to be accomplished within a supportive and understanding network of people who care for her, provides a base for thinking positively, for finding new hope and a path to its realization.

At the collective level, the building blocks for finding a sense of coherence in our experiences of the world are given to us in large part by our society: its values, its

institutions, and the identities it bestows on us as members of various groups. Through these shared understandings, we assemble our collective hopes for ourselves and for each other. Thus, we can begin the task of translating individual hope theory into collective hope theory. An individual's goals become the shared social vision of what society could be like for its members. An individual's sense of personal agency becomes the collective's sense of empowerment or political efficacy, of being able to have one's voice heard, and of having it join others to the point where it makes a difference. And finally, the pathways for implementing goals in individual hope theory can be thought of as the social institutions that are available for groups wishing to pursue collective action. We should be mindful, however, of the extent to which such social infrastructure is dependent on particular forms of governance. While readily accessible within a democracy, the pathways for realizing hopes for collectivities may be far less accessible and safe to use within totalitarian societies.

The Consequences of Collective Hope

If social goals are shared within a society, if its members feel that their voices can be heard and that others speak with or for them, and if the institutional pathways for achieving the goals are available and effective, we can conclude that all the elements of the hope process can be assembled for social groups as well as individuals. But with what purpose? Does it mean that change will occur? Unfortunately not, as Cartwright (this volume) reminds us. What it does mean is simply that change is possible and that all the elements are there for it to occur.

Hope psychologists argue that their model improves the well-being of individuals both in an emotional sense and in terms of their decision-making capacity: people with a good hope process in place have a blueprint for getting what they want out of life. But does the collective hope process have the capacity to ensure the well-being of a society in the same way? If we focus on ends in the context of South Africa, we can point to the way in which the collective hope process, with people like Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu as its leaders, ended apartheid and brought freedom to South Africa. But did it bring good decision making? It certainly did not bring speedy resolution to the oppression of the South African peoples. On the other hand, it was designed to be respectful of all who called South Africa their home, regardless of skin color. In this sense, the collective hope process of South Africa was socially inclusive. The day-to-day decisions of the antiapartheid movement did not please all, and there was no shortage of conflict, even hatred, but the collective hope process was designed so that all could have a "seat at the table," the objective being to persuade and win over those who opposed change, not to cast them out. Thus, we might conceptualize the future well-being of a society in terms of two criteria. First, we could consider a society as doing well if it was making progress toward the realization of its shared social vision. Second, we could consider the way in which a society was going about the realization of its vision: was it doing so inclusively or through domination, stigmatization, or denial of alternative voices?

This article focuses on this latter facet of a society's well-being, its inclusion of the different voices of hope.

An indicator of social inclusion in a society is the extent to which members express a willingness to cooperate with other members irrespective of the subgroups to which they belong. To the extent that shared goals and a sense of empowerment strengthen an individual's group identity, cooperation within that group is likely to increase (Moscovici and Doise 1994; Turner 1991). Taylor (2003) has demonstrated the way in which taxpayers who identify with broad social categories (such as an ordinary Australian) are more likely to be cooperative than those for whom subgroup identities (such as an industry or occupational group) are salient.

The operation of a tax system within a democratic society provides an interesting context in which to explore the proposition that a collective hope process predicts social cooperation. Cooperation involves individuals compromising with others, making sacrifices and bearing costs, and giving up some of their freedoms to be a valued member of the group. To be a cooperative actor within the tax system, taxpayers need to engage with the tax system in a way that respects the constraints imposed by law (including the spirit of the law) and to recognize the authority of the tax office. This would mean accepting that the tax authority is entitled to make demands and enforce those demands. It is important to note here that no assumption is being made that taxpayers will like the demands or the enforcement of them. Indeed, on some occasions, people within the system may actively resist the demands. But this resistance occurs within system boundaries. The objective of resistance is to change the demands so that the system is better. The collective hope process for tax system reform is still at work; it is just that some individuals are not seeing progress in the direction that they believe is best.

But what if one does not share the social goals of the taxpaying community; what if one believes that the tax system not only fails to engage with alternative goals but actively squashes them: does one lack hope? The answer is clearly no, but the hope remains more individualized as private hope, and if it is organized at all, it exists outside the dominant or traditional tax system.

Within regulatory contexts, there are strategies whereby individuals cut themselves off psychologically from their obligations. In taxation, people can opt out of the system through disengagement or game playing (Braithwaite 2003). Disengagement involves psychological withdrawal to the point where the authority of the tax office becomes irrelevant. Individuals place themselves psychologically outside tax-office control. The objective of game playing, similarly, is to assert the individual's freedom from tax authority constraint, but the goal is achieved through molding and using tax law to outwit the tax office. While disengagement involves a complete retreat, game playing involves an assertion of taxpayer prowess over a beleaguered tax office. In both cases of disengagement and game playing, we see dissociation from the tax system, at least the traditional tax system where paying tax is a social obligation that participants, in theory, willingly meet.

If the hope process for the tax system is on track, that is, people believe that it will deliver an improved quality of life in the long term and that it is operating in a socially inclusive manner, we might expect to see relatively high levels of coopera-

tion and relatively low levels of dissociation. If the collective hope process is faltering, cooperation should be low and dissociation should receive the endorsement of a substantial proportion of the taxpaying population. In the remainder of this article, the question addressed is how the collective hope process contributes to tax system well-being, defined as high citizen cooperation and low citizen dissociation.

Does Collective Hope Keep People in the System?

The first hypothesis tested in this article is that the collective hope process facilitates cooperation with systems of governance in democratic societies, specifically the tax system, through (1) commitment to social goals relating to having a better society and a better tax system; (2) belief that the collective voice can be heard and acted on; and (3) confidence that the institutional pathways to effect change are in place or can be put in place. As the elements of the hope process become stronger, cooperation with the system increases. It is replaced by resistance, when the elements of the hope process weaken, that is, as individuals become disappointed in the collective goals, the collective capacity to follow through with implementation, and the institutional pathways.

The second hypothesis tested in this article is that the major elements of collective hope will be absent when individuals dissociate from the system. By the same token, there is no reason to assume that hope is absent in dissociation. Traditional goals will be replaced by nontraditional goals as a sense of coherence is built around a new system. Furthermore, over time, sharing and persuading others of the desirability of a new approach allows private hopes to begin the laborious process of being transformed into collective hopes. In this respect, it is important to remind ourselves that Mandela started from just such a base. Dissociating from the South African regime would have preceded the building of an international antiapartheid movement that gave South Africans and the world collective hope.

Method

Database

These hypotheses were tested empirically using data from a national survey, the Community Hopes, Fears and Actions Survey (for details see Braithwaite 2001; Braithwaite et al. 2001). A stratified random sample of 7,754 persons was selected from the publicly available electoral rolls. A lengthy questionnaire on tax matters was sent to each person who had been randomly selected, together with a letter explaining the intent of the study and a stamped and addressed envelope for the return of the completed questionnaire. Two reminder cards were sent at two- to three-week intervals. After five weeks, a second questionnaire was posted to

nonrespondents, again followed by two reminder cards. (Details of the methodology of the survey and data supporting its representativeness on social-demographic criteria are available in Mearns and Braithwaite 2001.) Of the households contacted, 29 percent completed and returned the survey, providing 2,040 cases for further analysis.

Measuring cooperation and dissociation

In earlier work on regulation, individuals have been shown to adopt various motivational postures toward authority (Braithwaite et al. 1994; Braithwaite 1995, 2003). Motivational postures are composites of attitudes, beliefs, interests, and preferences that represent the social distance individuals wish to place between themselves and the authority. Motivational postures signal openly to the authority and to others how regulatees feel about the regulatory system, whether they believe it is worthwhile, whether they feel comfortable with the authority, and if they are predisposed to do what the authority wants.

Five motivational postures have been identified not as fixed, static, and mutually exclusive orientations but as options that come into play as the situation allows. They are commitment (the notion that contributing to the tax system is the right thing to do and benefits all); capitulation (the notion that the authority will treat taxpayers the right way as long as they do what is required); resistance (the notion that the tax authority is out to get taxpayers and can never be satisfied); disengagement (the notion that the authority cannot do anything to the taxpayer to cause a sleepless night); and game playing (the notion that the tax authority and taxpayers each play for the gray in tax law and enjoy it). Multi-item scales have been developed to measure these five postures (Braithwaite 2003) (see appendix for sample items).

When scores on these five scales of commitment, capitulation, resistance, disengagement, and game playing were intercorrelated and factor analyzed, two separate dimensions emerged. The first dimension was bipolar, with one end defined by commitment to the tax system and capitulation to the tax authority, while the other end was defined by resistance. This first factor was called cooperation-resistance, meaning the degree to which the individual was prepared to support the tax system and submit to its authority. Scores on commitment, capitulation, and resistance (reverse scored) were aggregated to form the cooperation-resistance scale. The percentage of the sample scoring above the midpoint on the cooperation-resistance scale was 82 percent, indicating that the majority of Australians express willingness to cooperate with the tax system.

The second dimension was unipolar with disengagement and game playing jointly defining the high-scoring end of the dimension. This factor was called dissociation because it reflected the extent to which individuals could break free of the regulatory constraints imposed by the authority. Scores on disengagement and game playing were combined to form the dissociation scale. The percentage of the sample scoring above the midpoint on this scale was 7 percent.

Measuring shared social goals

General policy directions for Australian society were assessed using two scales, one called the more caring and equal society scale, capturing the idea that our society would be more secure and attractive if it were more equitable and humane (endorsed by 91 percent of Australians); and the other, the small government, free markets scale, representing the view that free markets could provide the solution to society's problems more effectively than government (endorsed by 40 percent of Australians) (see appendix for items).

*An indicator of social inclusion in a society
is the extent to which members express a
willingness to cooperate with other members
irrespective of the subgroups to
which they belong.*

The ideology of small government and free markets is associated with the idea that individuals should be encouraged to operate competitively and should receive economic and social rewards for their accomplishment. By association, status for the individual becomes a legitimate social goal that all individuals should be encouraged to pursue. The pursuit of status, therefore, was included in the analysis as a measure of society's values, in particular, the extent to which values were developing along a more individualistic than communitarian track. Pursuit of status was rated as *important*, *very important*, or *of the utmost importance* by 36 percent of Australians (see appendix for items).

Tax-relevant policy priorities that were chosen for analysis in this article involved reform of the tax system. Previous analyses (Byng 2003) collapsed fourteen priorities into three policy initiatives for tax reform: (1) strengthening the tax system through increased transparency and an increase in the contributions of the privileged (rated as *important*, *very important*, or *of the utmost importance* by 91 percent of Australians); (2) lowering taxes through containment of the level of taxation and the costs of its administration (rated as *important*, *very important*, or *of the utmost importance* by 92 percent of Australians); and (3) simplifying the tax system (e.g., getting rid of exemptions and deductions, having a flat rate of tax) (rated as *important*, *very important*, or *of the utmost importance* by 56 percent of Australians) (see appendix for sample items).

Measuring collective efficacy

Collective efficacy is the psychological by-product of a democratic society. Together, citizens can achieve change—for example, through voting, making submissions to government, protesting, and campaigning for causes—that they would be unlikely to achieve as individuals. Moreover, through influencing politicians, members of the society can influence the administration of parts of government, for example, the tax system. Thus, collective efficacy was represented by measures of how well the democracy was working—whether citizens were given their say and could hold their representatives accountable. The first measure, satisfaction with democracy, captured the idea that the form of governance we have works pretty well and is better than other models on offer (endorsed by 58 percent of Australians) (see appendix for sample items).

The second democracy scale represented the absence of political efficacy. The disillusionment with the democracy scale captured the idea that the voice of ordinary citizens was no longer heard nor was it relevant to government decision making (endorsed by 86 percent of Australians) (see appendix for sample items).

The third measure was designed to test Antonovsky's (1972) idea that a central component in finding a sense of coherence and meaning is having the support of others. Without coherence and meaning, willingness to cooperate is likely to flag. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they felt social ties with honest taxpayers, specifically the degree to which they identified with this group (see appendix for sample items). The percentage of Australians scoring above the midpoint on this scale was 88 percent.

Measuring belief in institutional pathways

Within a democracy, the responsibility for implementing government policy falls on the shoulders of the public or civil service. The bureaucracy becomes the pathway for the implementation of goals set down by government after it has sought its mandate from the people. For the hope process to operate for the collective, therefore, the public must believe that the public service can and will perform its duties in accordance with its charter.

In the current context where the focus is on taxation, the perceived pathway to implementing the government's reforms is the Australian Taxation Office. If this pathway is viable in the eyes of the public, the public should be able to trust this authority. If one does not trust the tax office, then one is denying that there is a satisfactory institutional pathway for the achievement of collective goals (57 percent of Australians expressed trust in the tax office) (see appendix for sample items).

In addition, measures of potential trustworthiness were used in this analysis, in keeping with Antonovsky's (1972) suggestion that to cope effectively with a degree of constant chaos (or stress), there needs to be a mind-set of adaptability. Previous research has shown that people have clear and shared understandings of what is required of an entity (person, group, or organization) if that entity is to be consid-

ered trustworthy (Braithwaite 1998). These are called trust norms. Trust norms are coherent sets of beliefs that are used to gauge the trustworthiness of others, in this case, a government authority: citizens and governments know what they need to do to earn the trust of the other. In the present context, trust norms are being conceptualized as a backup if trust fails. The individual may decide that he or she no longer trusts the tax authority but may agree that trust will again be possible if the tax authority behaves in certain ways, that is, brings its actions into line with trust norms.

Trust norms may have an exchange base or a communal base. Exchange trust norms comprise criteria that focus on predictability: trust should be offered only when a person knows of the authority's competence, commitments, track record, and competing interests. In exchange for reassuring information about interests and likely outcomes, a person offers trust.

Communal trust norms comprise criteria that reflect concern for the well-being of the other. Thus, when a person believes that the authority is respectful, attentive and responsive to needs, consultative, accountable, and understanding of the position of the other, trust will be placed in the authority on the grounds that the authority will act in the interests of the citizenry.

The belief that the tax office could be considered trustworthy if it were to adhere to communal and exchange trust norms is measured in this article through the communal and exchange trust norm scales (93 percent of Australians rated exchange trust norms as *important*, *very important*, or *of the utmost importance*, and 99 percent of Australians rated communal trust norms as *important*, *very important*, or *of the utmost importance*) (see appendix for sample items).

Results

Are cooperation-resistance and dissociation correlated with social goals?

The correlations¹ in Table 1 show that willingness to cooperate with a tax system and its regulating authority was higher when citizens wanted a more caring and equal society and when they were wary of small government and free markets. Cooperative participants believed that the tax system should be strengthened through reforms that made the tax contributions of the privileged (corporations and wealthy individuals) more generous and transparent. They were less likely to prioritize containment (lower taxes) and simplification (flat rate of tax) of the tax system.

By way of contrast, dissociation was built around the hopes offered by small government and free markets. Those who favored game playing and disengaging were not particularly committed to a collective vision that created space for compassion and care. Instead, they were committed to the individualistic pursuit of economic and social status. Not surprisingly, the tax reform promoted by those who had dissociated from the system involved simplification.

TABLE 1
CORRELATIONS OF COOPERATION-RESISTANCE AND
DISSOCIATION WITH SOCIAL GOALS

Social Goals	Cooperation-Resistance	Dissociation
Policy direction and values		
More caring and equal society	.11***	-.15***
Small government, free markets	-.10***	.19***
Pursuit of status	-.04	.26**
Principles of tax reform		
Strengthen the system (target privileged)	.07**	-.02
Contain the system (lower tax)	-.07**	.04
Simplify the system (flat tax)	-.05*	.16***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Are cooperation-resistance and dissociation correlated with collective efficacy?

The correlations in Table 2 show that willingness to cooperate with a tax system and its regulating authority was higher when people perceived the democracy as working well, giving them a feeling of participation in and relevance to the process of governance. Moreover, willingness to cooperate was associated with social ties to others who cooperated. Group identification with other honest taxpayers appeared to enhance the meaning of the collective endeavor. Collective efficacy at the level of democratic participation or identification with honest taxpayers was not strong among high scorers on dissociation. Those who had dissociated from the tax system tended to express disillusionment.

Are cooperation-resistance and dissociation correlated with belief in institutional pathways?

The correlations in Table 3 show that willingness to cooperate with a tax system and its administration was associated with trust in the tax office. When trust norms were examined in relation to tax-office functioning, cooperative participants supported an investment in exchange for trust norms, that is, they believed that if the tax authority was to be considered trustworthy, it needed to deliver on its promises and improve upon its performance. Even if things were not as they should be, there was hope that they could be better in the future.

The dissociation response was notable in its dismissal of pathways to collective action, or even to the possibility of building them. Dissociation accompanied low trust. Not only was the tax authority rated poorly on trustworthiness, but it was also considered beyond the bounds of earning trust afforded by community trust norms.

TABLE 2
CORRELATIONS OF COOPERATION-RESISTANCE AND
DISSOCIATION WITH COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

Collective Efficacy	Cooperation-Resistance	Dissociation
Attitudes to democratic governance		
Satisfaction with democracy	.37***	.03
Disillusionment with the democracy	-.32***	.07**
Perceptions of solidarity on tax honesty		
Identifying with the honest taxpaying group	.39***	-.18***

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 3
CORRELATIONS OF COOPERATION-RESISTANCE AND
DISSOCIATION WITH BELIEF IN INSTITUTIONAL PATHWAYS

Institutional Pathways	Cooperation-Resistance	Dissociation
Trust in authority		
Trust in the tax office	.70***	-.15***
Communal trust norm for tax office	-.04	-.15***
Exchange trust norm for tax office	.08***	-.20***

*** $p < .001$.

Summary of bivariate findings

The above analyses demonstrate that cooperation with the tax system is linked to (1) social goals that are widely shared, (2) collective efficacy acquired through democratic institutions, and (3) belief in institutional pathways expressed as tax-office trustworthiness. Opting out of the system, on the other hand, involves rejection of these elements in the collective hope process. By the same token, those who opt out are not without private hope. Their vision is simply less widely shared and less well connected to the democracy's institutional processes, though there is no reason to believe that such private hope cannot be developed to incorporate the elements of collective hope in the future.

Integration of the components of the collective hope process

To integrate the findings to see how social goals, collective efficacy through democratic participation, and belief in institutional pathways act together to predict cooperation-resistance and dissociation, two sets of regression analyses were undertaken. The first set examined cooperation-resistance, the second dissociation. Theoretically, there are no compelling reasons for postulating that the variables should be entered in a particular order or in successive steps. Preliminary

TABLE 4
 BETA COEFFICIENTS AND R^2 FOR THE PREDICTION OF COOPERATION-
 RESISTANCE FROM THE COLLECTIVE HOPE PROCESS VARIABLES
 USING HIERARCHICAL LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Efficacy	Efficacy + Goals	Efficacy + Goals + Pathways
Efficacy			
Satisfaction with democracy	.24***	.24***	.10***
Disillusionment	-.26***	-.27***	-.03
Identifying with the honest taxpaying group	.34***	.34***	.22***
Goals			
More caring and equal society		.07***	.06***
Small government, free markets		-.05°	-.04°
Pursuit of status		-.07***	-.07***
Strengthen the system (target privileged)		.10***	.10***
Contain the system (lower tax)		-.11***	-.08***
Simplify the system (flat tax)		.00	.01
Pathways			
Trust in the tax office			.60***
Trust norms for tax office ^a			-.01
Adjusted R^2	.30***	.33***	.58***

a. Combined communal and exchange trust norm scales.

° $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

analyses, however, suggested that certain valuable insights could be gained through entering the efficacy variables first, followed by the social goals and reforms, and last the pathways. Because of the high correlation between support for exchange and communal trust norms ($r = .66$, $p < .001$), these scales were combined to form a single trust norm scale.

From Table 4, the efficacy variables were important predictors of cooperation-resistance; the stronger the sense of efficacy and belongingness to the honest taxpaying group, the greater the willingness to be a cooperative player in the tax system. Of greater interest is the suggestion in the findings that efficacy and trust in the democracy may be intertwined. It is of note that the contribution of the efficacy variables weakened when the pathway variables (trust in the tax authority) were included in the analysis. Possibly at the level of collective hope within a democratic system of governance, efficacy and having confidence in an institutional pathway are one and the same.

Having the institutional pathways in place to elicit change proved to be the most important factor contributing to cooperation. In this article, the critical variable that was measured in relation to pathways was trust, and its impact on cooperation was enormous (see Model 3, Table 4). This finding is consistent with the work of

Tyler and Huo (2002) on the importance of procedural justice and trust for cooperation.

While trust and efficacy dominated the regression models in Table 4, social goals for change were not lost from view. The vision that individuals had for their society and its tax system explained why some Australians offered cooperation to the tax authority while others resisted. The nature of the goals—or the substance of the hopes—was a consistent predictor of willingness to act collectively in the three models in Table 4. Cooperation with the tax authority accompanied a desire for a more caring and equal Australia and for a tax system in which the privileged could not avoid their tax obligations. Resistance was the more likely response among those whose aspirations were oriented to acquiring status in both economic and social terms and who wanted to see greater emphasis on small government and free markets, along with containment of the tax system. Containment involved lowering the amount of tax paid by ordinary people as well as streamlining the bureaucracy and the processes of tax collection.

Wanting to strengthen the tax system and wanting to contain the tax system might be seen as contrary objectives. Yet these reform packages are positively correlated ($r = .43, p < .001$). Those who think that strengthening the tax system is a good idea also are more likely to think that it is desirable to lower the tax rate and tidy up administrative practices to make the system more efficient. The way in which we should think about these findings is to broaden our lens and take on board the views of those who cannot be bothered with reform or better governance: those who no longer have hope. When we adopt a broader canvas and consider those who believe that something can be done to improve our social order and those who believe it is hopeless, we start to see why reformers of different persuasions might disagree on what to do while agreeing that it is worth doing something.

It is of considerable significance that the data in Table 4 show reformers having different feelings toward the tax office: those wishing for reform that contains the tax system were resistant; those wishing for a stronger system in which the wealthy pay their way were more likely to cooperate. These findings demonstrate that at the level of social goals and agendas for tax reform, there is contestation at work in the hope process that operates within the tax system. The goals that form part of the collective hope process are not allowed to “take off” without generating tension in the system. We see some evidence of a corrective mechanism against public hope at work.

The findings presented in Table 4, considered together, are also important in illustrating how reason and emotion are each critical to a collective hope process that brings about change from within a system. Reason and argument are fundamental to generating the ideas for change, but the positive emotions of collective efficacy and trust are critically important to holding cooperation together within the system. The findings also give us insight into why social change that is based on negotiation and cooperation requires skill and perseverance. In Table 4, we see how powerfully positioned the negative emotions of low collective efficacy and low

TABLE 5
 BETA COEFFICIENTS AND R^2 FOR THE PREDICTION OF DISSOCIATION
 FROM THE COLLECTIVE HOPE PROCESS VARIABLES USING
 HIERARCHICAL LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Predictor	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Efficacy	Efficacy + Goals	Efficacy + Goals + Pathways
Efficacy			
Satisfaction with democracy	.09***	.08***	.10***
Disillusionment	.09***	.08***	.05
Identifying with the honest taxpaying group	-.20***	-.20***	-.13***
Goals			
More caring and equal society		-.16***	-.12***
Small government, free markets		.13***	.12***
Pursuit of status		.25***	.26***
Strengthen the system (target privileged)		.00	.01
Contain the system (lower tax)		-.08**	-.04
Simplify the system (flat tax)		.11***	.09***
Pathways			
Trust in the tax office			-.13***
Trust norms for tax office ^a			-.18***
Adjusted R^2	.04***	.17***	.20***

a. Combined communal and exchange trust norm scales.

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

pathway trust are to fracture the emergence of a collective hope process that leads to reform through consensus or tolerance.

The story of Table 5 can be thought of as the sequel to Table 4 in that it shows what happens when the hope process takes a private turn and moves outside the system. *Private* is used here to signal that this hope process does not yet have the support of the majority of citizens. The marker for moving outside the system is identification with being an honest taxpayer. From the coefficients in Table 5, those who have dissociated from the system distance themselves from such an identity. Reinforcing this distancing response and its impact on dissociation are increased levels of disillusionment with the democracy and, once the pathways are taken into account, lack of trust in the tax authority. Of considerable importance among the pathway variables is the rejection of trust norms as a predictor of dissociation. When individuals no longer believe that the tax authority can do anything to earn their trust, the strength of their dissociation from the system is given a boost. Here, we see evidence of hopelessness with the dominant system. And it is interesting to note that the loss of hope does not involve simply disagreement over goals (which have already been statistically controlled in Model 3) but rather disbe-

lief that the authority could ever take the concerns of these individuals seriously enough to be responsive to them.

While loss of trust is an important feature of dissociation, goals should not be discounted as unimportant. In Table 5, we see a driving vision of a world where free markets rule and government is small in the sense of being relegated to the basic tasks of keeping the peace and administering justice. Associated with this vision for Australian society comes a desire for simplification of the tax system involving possibly a flat rate of tax, elimination of deductions, and abolition of exemptions. These are the goals that are shared by those who have dissociated from the tax system.

One last finding in Table 5 deserves comment. If we shift our attention to the first set of variables concerning collective efficacy, we see that satisfaction with the democracy is positively related to being dissociated from the traditional tax system, even though a degree of disillusionment and ambivalence about government exists among this group (see also Table 2). In retrospect, it seems most likely that being part of a democracy provides security for those who wish to step outside the system. Because one is aware of the benefits of living in a democracy, one is free to dissociate should one so desire.

Conclusion

This article explores the domain of collective hope drawing on the theories of individual hope researchers such as Snyder (2000) and Antonovsky (1972, 1979, 1993) and on the empirical insights offered through an analysis of national survey data on the community's hopes, fears, and actions in relation to the Australian tax system. The article did not define collective hope at the outset but concludes with a definition that provides parameters for the construct in our future work: collective hope is a shared desire for a better society, articulated through a broad set of agreed-upon goals and principles, developed and elaborated through socially inclusive dialogue. Of particular importance in this process is being responsive to (listening to, seriously engaging with) private competing hopes in the community. This conception of collective hope is in accord with the principles outlined by Bartal (2001) and endorsed by Drahos in this volume. The collective hope process—within the confines of democratic governance—has, according to the present analysis, three elements working together: commitment to shared goals, collective efficacy through democratic participation and a sense of group membership, and trust in institutional pathways for implementation. All three elements were shown to be present when taxpayers were prepared to cooperate with the tax authority. As a consequence, the following proposition for democratic governance is advanced for further study: When collective hope is high, an authority's capacity to elicit cooperation from its citizens is high; when collective hope is low, an authority's appeal to the citizenry is more likely to meet with resistance. Cooperation is posited as a necessary condition for adaptation to a rapidly changing world.

Collective versus private hope

In demonstrating the way in which Australians become involved in what has been called a collective hope process, we have also caught a glimpse of private hope—on the move, so to speak. A not insignificant proportion of Australians have hopes that are dissociated from the taxation system: they subscribe to goals that are in opposition to the system, and they are opposed to the power of government and its intrusion into private life. Most important, they reject the traditional institutional pathways, failing to find within them collective empowerment or confidence in the institution's capacity to deliver desirable outcomes. For these private hopes to become collective hopes, proponents need to win the hearts and minds of the people through building alternative sources of collective efficacy, making new institutional pathways, and grounding their agenda in the values and ways of being of the Australian community.

Identifying subcultures of support for what might be called an alternative vision of the tax system is beyond the scope of this article but not beyond speculation. Flourishing industries of financial planning and tax avoidance combined with vast resources of mobile capital point to a subculture that potentially can nurture a collective hope process. Increasingly, this subculture is drawing in small investors and, internationally, is challenging law and regulations that in the past have protected the capacity for revenue collection by sovereign states (Avi-Yonah 2000). In other words, those who have dissociated from the tax system are finding ways of establishing new pathways and building collective efficacy to realize hopes for a much-simplified and limited tax system. The glimmer of hope for the traditional system rests with revitalizing the democratic ideal and restoring the much-depleted legitimacy of the state (LaFree 1998). If it is the case that the alternative authorities on tax matters (i.e., alternative to the government) gain support through widespread disillusionment with current systems of governance, this article suggests that our democratically elected leaders have an opportunity to turn the tide. The tax authority, for instance, could be asked to increase its efforts to demonstrate its commitment to the principles of democratic governance and to implement reforms that will win the Australian community's trust.

Collective versus public hope

At the beginning of this article, the problem of distinguishing collective and public hope was acknowledged. Reflecting on the results of the analyses, the following points should be conceded to those who would favor a public hope interpretation. According to these data, to display high collective hope is to aspire to goals that are closely aligned with the authority. Furthermore, the strongest predictors of a willingness to act with the authority are the "feel good" emotions of being part of a group, believing in the democracy, and trusting the institutions that are in place to administer the system. All of these findings are consistent with either a public or a collective hope process.

There is, however, one finding that counters a public hope interpretation. Within the collective hope process described in this article, tensions are present. Goals such as tax containment trigger resistance rather than cooperation. And evidence shows that where there is resistance, there is highly organized collective action to change the system (Murphy 2003). Tensions within the system concerning competing goals and loss of voice (see findings on disillusionment) are the stuff of social change. Trust is the pathway that suggests that struggle from within is worthwhile. A process that allows contestation within has the hallmarks of being a carrier of collective hope rather than public hope.

In this article, the critical variable that was measured in relation to [institutional] pathways was trust, and its impact on cooperation was enormous.

At the same time, indications in these data hint that purposeful effort is required to ensure that hopes shared by the collective are always subjected to “cold analysis” (J. Braithwaite and Drahos 2000). On the basis of analyses presented in this article, there is reason to suspect that change will not always take place in a society when it needs to take place. With the positive emotions of trust and efficacy playing such an important role in configuring system well-being, authorities pursuing unsound goals—that is, goals that do not advance the interests of the people—probably can prosper for some time without citizen backlash. If current results can be generalized, even our democratically based institutions may benefit enormously from superficial hope: they may have a built-in second, or even recurring, chance for eliciting citizen cooperation.

None of this is to be interpreted as an argument for weakening trust in public institutions or in the democracy. If Antonovsky (1972, 1979) is right, it is in the interests of an individual’s personal well-being to feel a sense of belonging, to trust others, and to share a sense of what life is all about and what is worthwhile. These attributes are also important for harnessing the power of collective hope, which this article suggests is necessary if a society is to adapt to the new world order. Rather than regulating the emotional side of hope, the argument presented here involves enabling the rational side in a way that is respectful of the whole collective hope process—making special efforts to create new institutional spaces for inclusive, mature, open, and uncensored political debate about the issues confronting society. In this way, there is scope to nurture collective hope that reflects inclusive

and careful deliberation and to rein in public hope that fosters blind conformity to what powerful others say.

Appendix Samples of Items in Scales

All scales comprised multi-item scales. Two items from each scale are included below as examples. The items were rated on 5-, 6-, or 7-point scales representing different levels of agreement or importance. For further details, see Braithwaite et al. (2001).

Motivational posture of *commitment*: (1) Overall, I pay my tax with good will; (2) I accept responsibility for paying my fair share of tax.

Motivational posture of *capitulation*: (1) Even if the tax office finds that I am doing something wrong, they will respect me in the long run if I admit my mistakes; (2) If you cooperate with the tax office, they are likely to be cooperative with you.

Motivational posture of *resistance*: (1) It's impossible to satisfy the requirements of the tax office completely; (2) As a society, we need more people willing to take a stand against the tax office.

Motivational posture of *game playing*: (1) The tax office respects taxpayers who can give them a run for their money; (2) I enjoy talking to friends about loopholes in the tax system.

Motivational posture of *disengagement*: (1) I don't care if I am not doing the right thing by the tax office; (2) I personally don't think that there is much the tax office can do to make me pay tax if I don't want to.

More caring and equal society scale: (1) Our community and nation should appeal to a spirit that each person is important and has a way of influencing things; (2) Our society will be more secure and more attractive if it is also more equitable and humane, as well as more productive and efficient.

Small government, free markets scale: (1) Free markets work because individual people, cooperating peacefully and voluntarily through markets, can achieve much that politicians and bureaucrats cannot achieve using compulsion and direction; (2) The true function of government is to maintain peace and justice: this does not include interfering in national or international trade or commerce, or in the private transactions of citizens, save only as they threaten peace and justice.

Pursuit of status scale: How important are the following as guiding principles in your life? (1) Recognition by the community (having high standing in the community); (2) Economic prosperity (being financially well-off).

Strengthen the tax system: (1) Ensuring that people who are wealthier pay more tax; (2) Making the amount of tax paid by all large corporations publicly available.

Contain the tax system: (1) Keeping taxes as low as possible; (2) Keeping the costs of administering the tax system down.

Simplify the tax system: (1) Looking into a flat rate of tax; (2) Making the whole tax system simpler through getting rid of as many exemptions as possible.

Satisfaction with the democracy scale: (1) In our democracy, we can hold our representatives accountable; (2) Our form of democracy is not perfect, but it beats by a long shot any other alternative we have been shown.

Disillusionment with the democracy scale: (1) There's a dollar democracy that runs through our supposed democracy; (2) I don't think we have enough input into legislation and the decisions that are important.

Identification with others who are honest taxpayers: Thinking about the group, honest taxpayers, would you say (1) being an honest taxpayer is important to me; (2) I feel a sense of pride in being an honest taxpayer?

Trust in the tax office: (1) The tax office takes advantage of people who are vulnerable (reverse scored); (2) The tax office is open and honest in its dealings with citizens.

Belief in communal trust norms: To be trustworthy, how important is it for the tax office to (1) understand the position of taxpayers; (2) treat taxpayers with respect?

Belief in exchange trust norms: To be trustworthy, how important is it for the tax office to (1) be consistent in its decision making; (2) have a proven track record?

Note

1. Through the process of describing the measures, it will be evident to readers that many of the scale distributions are highly skewed. This reflects the phenomenon being measured: norms and values are likely to be endorsed by most people. All measures, therefore, were designed to discriminate different levels of acceptance so that there would be sufficient variability in the measures to undertake correlation and regression analyses. The problem that skewness poses for statistical inference was addressed through ensuring we used a large sample ($n = 2,040$) (Braithwaite and Law 1985).

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